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31 July 1985

C I A O P E R A T I O N S C E N T E R

Standard Operating Procedure # _____

SUBJECT: Critical Intelligence Alerting Procedures

I. General

A. The purpose of this SOP is to set forth procedures for handling by the CIA Operations Center of critical intelligence and other information which may require the immediate attention of the DCI or his principal deputies and advisors.

B. The DCI's requirements for being kept informed extend well beyond "critical intelligence" as officially defined (see Section II); his role as advisor to the President requires that he and his appropriate deputies be aware of developments not only in the field of intelligence but also in the broad field of national policy and military plans and operations.

C. Materials coming into the Operations Center must be examined from the point of view of what Agency component is most concerned, what Directorate needs to be informed, what advice or action should be undertaken prior to or concurrent with informing DCI of the receipt of information.

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D. All hands must be mindful of basic purposes of the alert procedure: TO PERMIT A SENIOR OFFICER OF THE AGENCY TO INITIATE A TIMELY AND APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO A GIVEN SITUATION AND TO KEEP DCI FULLY INFORMED OF BOTH THE SITUATION AND THE AGENCY RESPONSE THERE TO.

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Critical Intelligence

A. Critical intelligence is defined as "information indicating a situation or pertaining to a situation which affects the security or interests of the United States to such an extent that it may require the immediate attention of the President" (DCID No. 7/1, 7 December 1951).

B. Critical intelligence can be received via any channel available to the Operations Center,

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III. Alert Procedures for CRITICs and Critical Intelligence

NOTE: These procedures will not always be accomplished in the order given here. In each case the Senior Duty Officer (SDO) will decide priority of action; although the SDO normally will alert upward through D/OCI, in some cases urgency may demand that he alert DCI and/or others even before D/OCI is informed. In normal business hours, immediate passage of critical intelligence to O/DCI, O/DDCI, and O/DDI will be automatic.

A. Upon receipt, the SDO alerts D/OCI or Acting D/OCI in person or by telephone, and such higher officials as D/OCI or Acting D/OCI may direct.

1. Whenever the SDO briefs DCI on critical information, he will inform DCI as to what other officials have been alerted and what action has been or is being taken.

2. When D/OCI or other senior officials alerted by the SDO brief the DCI or take necessary action in a situation, the SDO will be kept informed of such as necessary.

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B. The Operations Center also alerts appropriate OCI division chiefs and analysts, and other Agency components as are appropriate.

C. Division chiefs and analysts involved report to Operations Center as required and remain until all briefing or written evaluation requirements are satisfied.

D. The CIA Operations Center has the responsibility for passing CRITICs and significant follow-ups electrically to the White House Situation Room [REDACTED]

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1. All CRITICs are so passed except those noted in Section IV below.

2. Concurrent with the electrical transmission of a CRITIC, the SDO will alert and as necessary brief the White House Situation Room by phone.

3. The White House Situation Room should be briefed by the SDO on his own initiative on other critical intelligence.

E. Contact is made with Operations Centers at other agencies and with the National Indications Center (NIC) to ensure complete interchange of all necessary information.

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F. If information concerns possible action against the U.S. or its allies, the OCI INDICO Staff and the Chairman of the Watch Committee are also alerted.

1. The DCI, DDCI, DOI, Chairman of the USIB Watch Committee, or any USIB agency principal may call a meeting of the Watch Committee at any stage of the alert procedure.

2. The SDO maintains close liaison with the NIC in order to inform CIA officers when such meetings are called.

G. Upon direction of D/OCI or higher authority, CRITICs and/or critical intelligence will be transmitted

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H. The SDO will relay CRITICs and/or critical intelligence to AEC and FBI if appropriate.

IV. CRITICs Requiring No Action

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alerting upward (and, during off-duty hours, downward) is not necessary on these unless there is some unusual aspect.

B. CRITICs overtaken by other reporting.

C. Test CRITICs.

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